Ephrem the Syrian

(c. 306 – c. 373)

BRIEFING

Ephrem the Syrian (/ˈiːfrəm, ˈɛfrəm/; c. 306 – 373), also known as **Ephraem the Deacon**, **Ephrem of Edessa** or **Aprem of Nisibis**, (Syriac: ܡܪܝ ܐܦܪܗܡ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ — *Mâr Aphrêm Sûryâyâ)* was a prominent Christian theologian and writer who is revered as one of the most notable hymnographers of Eastern Christianity. He was born in Nisibis, served as a deacon and later lived in Edessa.

Ephrem is venerated as a saint by all traditional Churches. He is especially revered in Syriac Christianity, both in East Syriac tradition and West Syriac tradition, and also counted as a Holy and Venerable Father (i.e., a sainted monk) in the Eastern Orthodox Church, especially in the Slovak tradition. He was declared a Doctor of the Church in the Catholic Church in 1920. Ephrem is also credited as the founder of the School of Nisibis, which in later centuries was the center of learning for the Church of the East.

Ephrem wrote a wide variety of hymns, poems, and sermons in verse, as well as prose exegesis. These were works of practical theology for the edification of the Church in troubled times. His performance practice of all-women choirs singing his madrāšê (teaching hymns) was particularly notable, and from it emerged the Syriac Christian tradition of "deaconess" choir members. Ephrem's works were so popular that, for centuries after his death, Christian authors wrote hundreds of pseudepigraphal works in his name. He has been called the most significant of all the fathers of the Syriac-speaking church tradition, the next most famous after him being Jacob of Serugh and Narsai.

LIFE

Ephrem was born around the year 306 in the city of Nisibis (modern Nusaybin, Turkey), in the Roman province of Mesopotamia, that was recently acquired by the Roman Empire. Internal evidence from Ephrem's hymnody suggests that both his parents were part of the growing Christian community in the city, although later hagiographers wrote that his father was a pagan priest. In those days, religious culture in the region of Nisibis included local polytheism, Judaism and several varieties of the Early Christianity. Most of the population spoke the Aramaic language, while Greek and Latin were languages of administration. The city had a complex ethnic composition, consisting of "Assyrians, Arabs, Greeks, Jews, Parthians, Romans, and Iranians".

Jacob, the second bishop of Nisibis, was appointed in 308, and Ephrem grew up under his leadership of the community. Jacob of Nisibis is recorded as a signatory at the First Council of Nicea in 325. Ephrem was baptized as a youth and almost certainly became a son of the covenant, an unusual form of Assyrian proto-monasticism. Jacob appointed Ephrem as a teacher (Syriac *malpānâ*, a title that still carries great respect for Syriac Christians). He was ordained as a deacon either at his baptism or later. He began to compose hymns and write biblical commentaries as part of his educational office. In his hymns, he sometimes refers to himself as a Ephrem is .(*dayrâ* ,ܕܝܪܐ) 'and to his community as a 'fold ,(*rā'yâ* ,ܪܥܝܐ) "to his bishop as the "shepherd ,(*allānâ*' ,ܐܠܢܐ) ""herdsman popularly credited as the founder of the School of Nisibis, which, in later centuries, was the centre of learning of the Church of the .East

In 337, Emperor Constantine I, who had legalised and promoted the practice of Christianity in the Roman Empire, died. Seizing on this opportunity, Shapur II of Persia began a series of attacks into Roman North Mesopotamia. Nisibis was besieged in 338, 346 and 350. During the first siege, Ephrem credits Bishop Jacob as defending the city with his prayers. In the third siege, of 350, Shapur rerouted the River Mygdonius to undermine the walls of Nisibis. The Nisibenes quickly repaired the walls while the Persian elephant cavalry became bogged down in the wet ground. Ephrem celebrated what he saw as the miraculous salvation of the city in a hymn that portrayed Nisibis as being like Noah's Ark, floating to safety on the flood.[*citation needed*]

One important physical link to Ephrem's lifetime is the baptistery of Nisibis. The inscription tells that it was constructed under Bishop Vologeses in 359. In that year, Shapur attacked again. The cities around Nisibis were destroyed one by one, and their citizens killed or deported. Constantius II was unable to respond; the campaign of Julian in 363 ended with his death in battle. His army elected Jovian as the new emperor, and to rescue his army, he was forced to surrender Nisibis to Persia (also in 363) and to permit the expulsion of the entire Christian population. Ephrem declined being ordained a bishop by feigning madness, because he regarded himself unworthy for it.

Ephrem, with the others, went first to Amida (Diyarbakır), eventually settling in Edessa (Urhay, in Aramaic) in 363. Ephrem, in his late fifties, applied himself to ministry in his new church and seems to have continued his work as a teacher, perhaps in the School of Edessa. Edessa had been an important center of the Aramaic-speaking world, and the birthplace of a specific Middle Aramaic dialect that came to be known as the Syriac language. The city was rich with rivaling philosophies and religions. Ephrem comments that orthodox Nicene Christians were simply called "Palutians" in Edessa, after a former bishop. Arians, Marcionites, Manichees, Bardaisanites and various gnostic sects proclaimed themselves as the true church. In this confusion, Ephrem wrote a great number of hymns defending Nicene orthodoxy. A later Syriac writer, Jacob of Serugh, wrote that Ephrem rehearsed all-female choirs to sing his hymns set to Syriac folk tunes in the forum of Edessa. In 370 he visited Basil the Great at Caesarea, and then journeyed to the monks of Egypt. As he preached a panegyric on St. Basil, who died in 379, his own death must be placed at a later date. After a ten-year residency in Edessa, in his sixties, Ephrem succumbed to the plague as he ministered to its victims. He died in 373.

WRITINGS AND AUTHORSHIP

Ephrem wrote exclusively in his native Aramaic language, using the local Edessan (*Urhaya*) dialect, that later came to be known as the Classical Syriac.

Manuscripts

According to the Catalogues of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Library published by Forshall & Rosen (1839) and Wright (1870–72), there are "ninety or so manuscripts which contain works by or attributed to Ephraem."

British Library manuscripts (mss.) containing works by or attributed to Ephrem the Syrian

5th century	6th century	7th century	8th century	9th century	10th century	11th century	12th century	13th century
6 mss.	14 mss.	4 mss.	11 mss.	19 mss.	7 mss.	12 mss.	8 mss.	11 mss.

Hymns

Over four hundred hymns attributed to Ephrem still exist. Granted that some have been lost, Ephrem's productivity is not in doubt. The church historian Sozomen credits Ephrem with having written three million verses. Ephrem combines in his writing a threefold heritage: he draws on the models and methods of early Rabbinic Judaism, he engages skillfully with Greek science and philosophy, and he delights in the Mesopotamian/Persian tradition of mystery symbolism.

The most important of his works are his lyric, teaching hymns (ܡܕܪܫ̈ܐ, *madrāšê*). These hymns are full of rich, poetic imagery drawn from biblical sources, folk tradition, and other religions and philosophies. The *madrāšê* are written in stanzas of syllabic verse and employ over fifty different metrical schemes. The form is defined by an antiphon, or congregational refrain (ܚܘܢܝܛܐ, *'ûnîṯâ*), between each independent strophe (or verse), and the refrain's melody mimics that of the opening half of the strophe. Each *madrāšâ* had its *qālâ* (ܩܠܐ), a traditional tune identified by its opening line. All of these *qālê* are now lost. It seems that Bardaisan and Mani composed *madrāšê*, and Ephrem felt that the medium was a suitable tool to use against their claims.

The *madrāšê* are gathered into various hymn cycles. In the CSCO critical edition of Beck et al. (1955–1975), these have been given standardised names and abbreviations. By the year 2000, English translations had been published for the following:

- 52 hymns *On Virginity*
- 28 hymns *On the Nativity*
- 15 hymns *On Paradise*
- 4 hymns *Against [Emperor Caesar] Julian*
- *Carmina Nisibena* or *On Nisibis*
- *On the Church*
- *On Lent*
- *On the Paschal Season*
- *Against Heresies*

Some of these titles do not do justice to the entirety of the collection (for instance, only the first half of the *Carmina Nisibena* is about Nisibis). Bates (2000) remarked: "[Various] collections of Ephrem's hymns [...] appear to be randomly assembled by later editors and named for the subject of the first hymn in the collection only".

Particularly influential were his *Hymns Against Heresies*. Ephrem used these to warn his flock of the heresies that threatened to divide the early church. He lamented that the faithful were "tossed to and fro and carried around with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness and deceitful wiles" (Eph 4:14). He devised hymns laden with doctrinal details to inoculate right-thinking Christians against heresies such as docetism. The *Hymns Against Heresies* employ colourful metaphors to describe the Incarnation of Christ as fully human and divine. Ephrem asserts that Christ's unity of humanity and divinity represents peace, perfection and salvation; in contrast, docetism and other heresies sought to divide or reduce Christ's nature and, in doing so, rend and devalue Christ's followers with their false teachings.

Authencity of the hymns On Epiphany

The most complete, critical text of writings attributed to Ephrem was compiled between 1955 and 1979 by Dom Edmund Beck, OSB, as part of the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* (CSCO). Beck's 1959 critical edition of the madrashe (hymns) and mêmrê (homilies) attributed to Ephrem led to much scholarly debate on the authenticity of the madrashe known as *On Epiphany*, as Ephrem was certainly not familiar with Epiphany as a feast celebrating Jesus' baptism on 6 January. Unlike in Europe, where the Nativity of Jesus was celebrated on 25 December, but the baptism of Jesus would evolve into a separate feast called "Epiphany" on 6 January, there was only one Christian feast celebrated in winter in the time and place where Ephrem lived, namely the Nativity on 6 January, when baptism was also performed. A 1956 paper written by Beck himself therefore warned researchers not to base their reconstructions of Ephrem's baptismal theology on the contents of these madrashe, given the fact that many of the hymns presuppose that Epiphany and Nativity were two separate feasts celebrated two weeks apart, thereby challenging Ephrem's authorship. While the oldest surviving manuscripts of Ephrem's hymns date to the 6th century and contain hymns on the Nativity that Beck thought were certainly authentic, the contested hymns *On Epiphany* are missing from them. They do not appear in manuscripts until much later, in the 9th century, suggesting that they were interpolated. Scholars have largely accepted Beck's arguments that the collection as a whole was established after the 4th century, and that some hymns in them were not written by Ephrem, or at least not in the form that they have been preserved in, but that other hymns should nevertheless be considered authentic.

Performance practices and gender

The relationship between Ephrem's compositions and femininity is shown again in documentation suggesting that the madrāšê were sung by all-women choirs with an accompanying lyre. These women's choirs were composed of members of the Daughters of the Covenant, an important institution in historical Syriac Christianity, but they weren't always labeled as such. Ephrem, like many Syriac liturgical poets, believed that women's voices were important to hear in the church as they were modeled after Mary, mother of Jesus, whose acceptance of God's call led to salvation for all through the birth of Jesus. One variety of the madrāšê, the *soghyatha*, was sung in a conversational style between male and female choirs] The women's choir would sing the role of biblical women, and the men's choir would sing the male role. Through the role of singing Ephrem's madrāšê, women's choirs were granted a role in worship.

Further writings

Ephrem also wrote verse homilies (ܡܐܡܪܐ, *mêmrê*). These sermons in poetry are far fewer in number than the madrāšê. The mêmrê were written in heptasyllabic couplets (pairs of lines of seven syllables each).

The third category of Ephrem's writings is his prose work. He wrote a biblical commentary on the Diatessaron (the single gospel harmony of the early Syriac church), the Syriac original of which was found in 1957. His *Commentary on Genesis and Exodus* is an exegesis of Genesis and Exodus. Some fragments exist in Armenian of his commentaries on the Acts of the Apostles and Pauline Epistles.

He also wrote refutations against Bardaisan, Mani, Marcion and others.

Symbols and metaphors

Ephrem's writings contain a rich variety of symbols and metaphors. Christopher Buck gives a summary of analysis of a selection of six key scenarios (the way, robe of glory, sons and daughters of the Covenant, wedding feast, harrowing of hell, Noah's Ark/Mariner) and six root metaphors (physician, medicine of life, mirror, pearl, Tree of life, paradise).

Selected works

Boasting an extensive corpus, Ephrem's poems, hymns, prayers and prose has been incorporated deeply into every facet of the Syriac tradition, from the Liturgy of the Hours (Shehimo) to Divine Liturgy. The following is a bedtime prayer, found in the Compline of the Shehimo for some weekdays.

Lord have mercy upon us, kindly accept our service
Sending from Thy treasu-ry, kindness, mercy – and pardon.

Grant me Oh Lord, while I stand, keeping vigil before Thee

Should I fall to slumber's hand, guard thou me from – sinful sleep.

If I trespass while awake, by thy grace absolve me Lord

If I transgress – in my sleep, pardon with Thy – compa-ssion

By the Cross (+) of Thy meekness, grant me, Lord, a restful sleep

Deliver me from – evil dreams, and from sinful thoughts, Oh Lord!

Through the night govern me, Lord Grant to me a – peaceful sleep;

Let not Evil- and his thoughts, should have domain – over me.

Grant to me Thy bright Angel, that he may guard – all my limbs;

Save me from un-holy lust, by Thy Body – that I ate.

While I lie and sleep in calm, may Thy blood be – my guardian;

Granting freedom – to my soul, which is but Thy – own image.

Thy hand shaped me, Oh my Lord, shadow me with – Thy right hand,

Thy mercy be a for-tress, shielding me Lord – all around.

While my body rests and sleeps, may Thy power – keep vigil;

Let my sleep in – Thy presence, pleasing like a sweet incense.

Let not evil touch my bed, by Thy mother's prayer for me;

By Thy pleasing sacrifice, keep Satan from – hurting me.

Fulfill Thy word with me, Lord, and guard my life by Thy Cross (+);

Waking I shall – praise Thy name, for Thou loved me – in weakness.

Grant Oh Lord, by Thy mercy, that I hear and – do Thy will;

Grant me an eve – full of peace, and a night of- righteous-ness.

Oh our Savior, Jesus Christ, who is indeed the true light;

Thy honor stays – in the light, worshipped by all – sons of light.

Jesus, Savior of the world, who stays and lives – in the light;

to Thee praise, on – us mercy, in this world and – that to come.

Praise to Thee Lord, praise to Thee, praise a thousand thousand fold;

Tens of thousands – we praise Thee, to Thee praise on – us mercy.

Praise to whom Watchers adore; and heavenly Angels serve

Lord of Watchers and Angels; accept our supplications

Praise to the One who is three; and to the three who are One.

Father, Son and Holy Ghost; who is the One and true God.

PSEUDEPIGRAPHY AND MISATTRIBUTIONS

Ephrem's meditations on the symbols of Christian faith and his stand against heresy made him a popular source of inspiration throughout the church. There is a huge corpus of Ephrem pseudepigraphy and legendary hagiography in many languages. Some of these compositions are in verse, often mimicking Ephrem's heptasyllabic couplets.[*citation needed*] Syriac churches still use many of Ephrem's hymns as part of the annual cycle of worship. However, most of these liturgical hymns are edited and conflated versions of the originals.[*citation needed*] Another one of the works attributed to Ephrem was the *Cave of Treasures*, written in Syriac, but by a much later, unknown author, who lived at the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 7th century.

Greek Ephrem

There is a very large number of works by "Ephrem" extant in Greek. In the literature this material is often referred to as "Greek Ephrem", or *Ephraem Graecus* ("Ephrem the Greek", as opposed to the real Ephrem the Syrian), as if it was by a single author. This is not the case, but the term is used for convenience. Some texts are in fact Greek translations of genuine works by Ephrem, but most are not. Ephrem is attributed with writing hagiographies such as *The Life of Saint Mary the Harlot* (extant in Greek and Latin), though this credit is called into question. The best known of these writings is the *Prayer of Saint Ephrem*, which is recited at every service during Great Lent and other fasting periods in Eastern Christianity.

There has been very little critical examination of any of these works. They were edited uncritically by Assemani, and there is also a modern Greek edition by Phrantzolas. Amongst scholars, there is a broad consensus that the Greek corpus attributed to Ephrem is only 'sporadically authentic'.

Latin Ephrem and other languages

There are also works by "Ephrem" in Latin, Slavonic and Arabic. "Ephrem Latinus" is the term given to Latin translations of "Ephrem Graecus". None is by Ephrem the Syrian. "Pseudo-Ephrem Latinus" is the name given to Latin works under the name of Ephrem which are imitations of the style of Ephrem Latinus. One example is the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Ephraem*, extant in one Latin and one Syriac version. Also attributed to Ephrem are the *Parenesis* or "precepts", found in the 10th-century Rila fragments and the early 13th-century *Kyiv Caves Patericon*, translated into Old Church Slavonic.

VENERATION AS A SAINT

Soon after Ephrem's death, legendary accounts of his life began to circulate. One of the earlier "modifications" is the statement that Ephrem's father was a pagan priest of Abnil or Abizal. However, internal evidence from his authentic writings suggest that he was raised by Christian parents.

Ephrem is venerated as an example of monastic discipline in Eastern Christianity. In the Eastern Orthodox scheme of hagiography, Ephrem is counted as a Venerable Father (i.e., a sainted monk). His feast day is celebrated on 28 January and on the Saturday of the Venerable Fathers (Cheesefare Saturday), which is the Saturday before the beginning of Great Lent.

On 5 October 1920, Pope Benedict XV proclaimed Ephrem a Doctor of the Church ("Doctor of the Syrians").

He is also referred to as the Deacon of .(*Kenārâ d-Rûḥâ* ,ܟܢܪܐ ܕܪܘܚܐ :Syriac) The most popular title for Ephrem is *Harp of the Spirit* .Edessa, the Sun of the Syrians and a Pillar of the Church

His Roman Catholic feast day of 9 June conforms to his date of death. For 48 years (1920–1969), it was on 18 June, and this date is still observed in the Extraordinary Form.

Ephrem is honored with a feast day on the liturgical calendar of the Episcopal Church (USA) on June 10.

Ephrem is remembered in the Church of England with a commemoration on 9 June.

TRANSLATIONS

- *Sancti Patris Nostri Ephraem Syri opera omnia quae exstant* (3 vol), by Peter Ambarach Rome, 1737–1743.

- E. Beck, *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymen De Nativitate (Epiphania)*, CSCO 186/187, Leuven 1959, 144–191 (131–177). (in German).

  - French translation based on the edition of Beck: *Ephrem le Syrien. Hymnes sur l'Épiphanie. Hymnes baptismales de l'Orient syrien. Introduction, traduction du texte syriaque, notes et index par François Cassingena*, o.s.b ., *Spiritualité orientale*, no 70, Abbaye de Bellefontaine, Bégrolles-en-Mauges 1997.

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PRAYER OF SAINT EPHREM

"The Prayer of Saint Ephrem" (Greek: Ἐὐχὴ τοῦ Ὁσίου Ἐφραίμ, *Efchí toú Osíou Efrem*), is a prayer attributed to Saint Ephrem the Syrian and used during the Great Lent by the Eastern Orthodox and Byzantine Catholic Churches. In the Byzantine tradition, this prayer is considered to be the most succinct summation of the spirit of Great Lent and is hence the Lenten prayer *par excellence*, prayed during all Lenten weekday services. There are two versions of the prayer currently in use, reflecting liturgical Greek and Slavonic uses. Modern translations have been produced from both Greek and Slavonic, but some attempt to combine the two.

Greek version

> *Κύριε καὶ Δέσποτα τῆς ζωῆς μου, πνεῦμα ἀργίας, περιεργίας, φιλαρχίας, καὶ ἀργολογίας μή μοι δῷς.*
>
> *Πνεῦμα δὲ σωφροσύνης, ταπεινοφροσύνης, ὑπομονῆς, καὶ ἀγάπης χάρισαί μοι τῷ σῷ δούλῳ.*
>
> *Ναί, Κύριε Βασιλεῦ, δώρησαι μοι τοῦ ὁρᾶν τὰ ἐμὰ πταίσματα, καὶ μὴ κατακρίνειν τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, ὅτι εὐλογητὸς εἶ, εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν*

In English, this may be translated:

> *O Lord and Master of my life, a spirit of idleness, curiosity, ambition, and idle talking; give me not.*
>
> *But a spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love, bestow upon me, Thy servant.*
>
> *Yea, O Lord King: grant me to see mine own failings, and not to condemn others; for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.*

This Greek version is the form of the prayer found in the current liturgical books of the Greek Orthodox Church and all those churches that utilise Greek or Arabic in their services. Early Greek manuscripts preserve several variant texts, however, including the reading φιλαργυρίας (*philargyrias,* "love of *money*") in place of φιλαρχίας (*philarchias*, "love of *power*"), which was taken up in the first Slavonic translations. It is difficult to know which form is more ancient, since both vices are serious afflictions for both monastic and lay Christians.

The Greek word σωφροσύνης (*sōphrosynēs*) in the second line is often translated in English as 'chastity.' However, this is a highly problematic archaism, since, in modern English, 'chastity' refers almost exclusively to *sexual* continence. The Greek word is much broader in meaning and carries the sense of soundness of mind, discretion, and prudence. Therefore, the prayer asks in the second line for a restoration to Christian wholeness and integrity, foreshadowing the petition of the third line that the supplicant might have the temptation to judge others removed from them (cf. Matt. 7:1–5). It is possible that the choice to translate σωφροσύνης as 'chastity' reflects both the affection for the Cranmerian prose of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer present in some anglophone Orthodox (which frequently leads to an ambiguity of meaning in liturgical and scriptural texts, as exemplified here) and also the presupposition that a concern for sexual purity is predominant in the Orthodox tradition.

Sometimes the phrase "idle talk" is substituted by the Latinate word *vaniloquence*, which carries about the same meaning.

Church Slavonic versions

Pre-Nikonian

In the earliest Church Slavonic translations, the prayer was rendered:

> *Господи и владико животоу моемоу, духъ оуныніѧ, небрежєніѧ, срѣбролюбіѧ и празднословіѧ ѿжєни ѡ мєнє.*
>
> *Духъ же цѣломоудріѧ, смиреніѧ, терпѣніѧ и любве дароуй ми рабоу твоемоу.*
>
> *Ей Господи Царю, даждь ми зрѣти моѧ согрѣшеніѧ, и еже не ѡсуждати брата моегѡ, якѡ благословенъ еси во вѣки. Аминь.*

In English, this is:

> *O Lord and Master of my life, take from me a spirit of despondency, sloth, love of money, and idle talk.*
>
> *But give to me, your servant, a spirit of sober-mindedness, humility, patience, and love.*
>
> *Yes, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins and not to judge my brother, since you are blessed to the ages. Amen.*

There are two main differences in the first line between the Greek text given above and the Slavonic text given here. First, the Greek reads "μή μοι δῷς," meaning "grant me not," whereas the Slavonic has "ѡтжєни ѡ мєнє," meaning "take from me." The Greek text unambiguously implies that God is the one who grants *every* character of spirit or breath (πνεῦμα), and the supplicant therefore requests that God give a spirit characterized not by vice (line 1) but by virtue (line 2). The supplicant effectively asks God to lighten their burden (cf. Matt. 11:28–30). The Slavonic text, however, could be read as asking God to *replace* one kind of spirit or breath with another, with the implication that the first kind of spirit (line 1) does *not* come from God to begin with. This could lead to a dualist reading of the prayer, opposing the unvirtuous 'spirit of man' to the virtuous 'spirit of God.' The Greek text seems better to reflect the monastic tradition, as expressed by writers such as the fifth-century Abba Isaiah of Scetis in his *Ascetic Discourses*, that *all* passions are ultimately divine gifts with a sacred purpose. The second main difference is that, where the Greek has περιεργίας (*periergia* meaning 'idle curiosity' or 'meddling'), the Slavonic has небрежєніѧ (*nebrezheniya*) meaning 'negligence,' 'indifference,' or 'despondency,' which would be ἀκηδία (akêdia) in Greek—the classic monastic sin. A third minor difference is the transposition of terms in the first line. Whereas the Greek consistently reads "ἀργίας, περιεργίας" ('sloth, meddling'), the Slavonic reads "оуныніѧ, небрежєніѧ" ('despondency [in place of meddling], sloth'). Despondency (оуныніѧ) remained at the head of the list of vices until the order was conformed to the Greek text during Nikon's reforms. It seems likely that the differences between the Greek and Slavonic texts reflect the fact that the Slavonic text was prepared from a different Greek text than the one currently used, but this has yet to be demonstrated definitively.

This Slavonic version was superseded in the Russia Orthodox Church in 1656, following the liturgical reforms of Patriarch Nikon, but remains in use among the Old Believers today.

Kievan version of 1639

> *Господи и владыко живота моегѡ, духъ оуныніѧ, небрежєніѧ, любоначаліѧ и празднословіѧ ѿжєни ѡ мєнє.*
>
> *Духъ же цѣломоудріѧ, смиреномоудріѧ, терпѣніѧ и любве, дароуй ми рабоу твоемоу.*
>
> *Ей Господи Царю, даждь ми зрѣти моѧ согрѣшеніѧ, и не ѡсуждати брата моегѡ, якѡ благословенъ еси во вѣки вѣковъ. Аминь.*

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me a spirit of despondency, sloth, love of power, and idle talk.

But give to me, your servant, a spirit of sober-mindedness, humility, patience, and love.

Yes, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins and not to judge my brother, since you are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.

This version is to be found in the *Liturgicon* (*Sluzhebnik*) or *Priest's Service Book* published in Kiev in 1639 by Peter Mohyla. Substantially it is similar to the earlier version, but with some of the case-endings updated, as by that time, use of the dative case (животоу моемоу) to mark possession was considered distinctively archaic, and use of the genitive case (живота моегѡ) felt to be more correct. It retains most of the distinctive differences that the earlier version has from the Greek, with none of the more drastic changes that may be found in the next version.

This version was once used throughout the Kievan metropolia, as well as in the Orthodox Churches of Central Europe (Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Austria and so on), but later dropped out of use, and the next version adopted. It is currently only used (either in the original Slavonic or in vernacular translations) by those churches that use the Ruthenian recension—the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, the Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church, the Belarusian Greek Catholic Church, the Hungarian Greek Catholic Church, and the Slovak Greek Catholic Church.

Nikonian version of 1656

Господи и владыко живота моегѡ, духъ праздности, оуныніѧ, любоначаліѧ и празднословіѧ не даждь ми.

Духъ же цѣломоудріѧ, смиренномоудріѧ, терпѣніѧ и любве, дароуй ми рабоу твоемоу.

Ей Господи Царю, даруй ми зрѣти моѧ прегрѣшеніѧ, и не ѡсуждати брата моегѡ, якѡ благословенъ еси во вѣки вѣковъ. Аминь.

O Lord and Master of my life, grant me not a spirit of sloth, despondency, love of power, and idle talk.

But give to me, your servant, a spirit of sober-mindedness, humility, patience, and love.

Yes, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own faults and not to judge my brother, since you are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.

This is the version found in the editions of the liturgical books published in 1656 by Patriarch Nikon of Moscow. It is the form currently in use by the Russian Orthodox Church (both the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia), the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the Belarusian Orthodox Church, the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, and all other Slavic Orthodox Churches. It differs substantially from the current Greek form of the prayer only in the retention of оуныніѧ ('despondency') in place of περιεργίας ('meddling'). Considering the principles on which Patriarch Nikon's reforms were undertaken, it seems likely that the 1656 text of the prayer was prepared from a Greek text containing the word ἀκηδίας ('despondency') rather than περιεργίας.

An English version of the Prayer of St Ephrem commonly in use in the Orthodox Church in America (which inherited its liturgical practices from the Slavic tradition) maintains the distinction between *take from me* (line 1) and *give to me* (line 2) that was eliminated in the 1656 Slavonic translation. This does not appear to reflect a conscious choice of the OCA to return to the Pre-Nikonian text or to imitate the Old Believers, but probably derives from the fact that many OCA parishes were founded by Orthodox (and Byzantine Rite Catholics) from Central Europe who used the Ruthenian Slavonic text of 1639, but with the оуныніѧ and небрежѥніѧ (line 1) inverted to conform to the Nikonian/Greek order.

Liturgical usage

At weekday services during Great Lent, the prayer is prescribed for each of the canonical hours and at the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts.

During the period of the Triodion, the prayer is first recited on Wednesday and Friday only on Cheesefare week and thereafter at every weekday service from vespers on the evening of the Sunday of Forgiveness, the service which begins Great Lent, through Wednesday of Holy Week. The prayer is not said on Saturdays and Sundays (vespers on Sunday evening is of Monday, since the Byzantine liturgical day begins at sunset), because these days are not strict fasting days (oil and wine are always permitted). This means that the weekends retain a festal character, even during the Great Fast, and the Divine Liturgy may be celebrated as usual.

During the Nativity Fast, Dormition Fast and the Apostles' Fast, the lenten order of services may be used when the divine liturgy is not celebrated. In such an instance, the Prayer of St Ephrem is recited then, too.

Bows and prostrations

The prayer is accompanied by bows and prostrations.

Depending upon the rubrics, the prayer is said either once or twice:

- When it is said once, it is divided into three parts, with a prostration after each part.
- When it is said twice (though local practices may vary) it is said the first time with a prostration after each part; then follow a number of either bows or prostrations (either in silence or accompanied by short ejaculatory prayers); and then the prayer is said the second time in its entirety (i.e., not broken up by prostrations) followed by a final prostration.

Current Russian Orthodox practice, as followed in the Moscow Patriarchate and the ROCOR, is to perform twelve *metanias* (bows from the waist) after the first recitation of the prayer (with three prostrations), saying at each bow, "Боже, wчисти мѧ грѣшнаго (грѣшноую if one is female)"—"O God, cleanse me a sinner". When the prayer is prayed in the course of a church service, the priest alone says aloud "O God, cleanse me a sinner", as everyone makes bows. In the common usage of ROCOR, the last (twelfth) time he adds, "...и помилоуй мѧ"—"...and have mercy on me." Though this last addition is not written in the service books, it helps all of those present to know that it was the last bow.

The tradition of the Old Believers is similar, but instead of twelve bows in silence, they have thirteen prostrations, each time reciting the Jesus Prayer or the following prayers:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner ('Господи Ісусе Христе Сыне Божїй помилоуй мѧ грѣшнаго/грѣшноую')

God be merciful to me a sinner. ('Боже милостивъ буди мнѣ грѣшномоу')

God, cleanse me of my sins and have mercy on me. ('Боже wчисти грѣхи моѧ и помилоуй мѧ')

You have created me; Lord, have mercy on me. ('Создавый мѧ Господи, помилоуй')

I have sinned immeasurably; Lord, forgive me. ('Безъ числа согрѣшихъ, Господи прости мѧ')

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

God be merciful to me a sinner.

God, cleanse me of my sins and have mercy on me.

You have created me; Lord, have mercy on me.

I have sinned immeasurably; Lord, forgive me.

God be merciful to me a sinner.

You have created me; Lord, have mercy on me.

I have sinned immeasurably; Lord, forgive me.

The Ruthenian tradition, again, differs slightly, retaining some aspects closely related to Old Believer usage. The 1639 Liturgikon (Sluzhebnik) of Peter Mohyla prescribes twelve waist-bows, repeating the following three lines to make twelve:

God be merciful to me a sinner. ('Боже милостивъ буди мнѣ грѣшномоу')

God, cleanse me of my sins and have mercy on me. ('Боже wчисти грѣхи моѧ и помилоуй мѧ')

I have sinned immeasurably; Lord, forgive me. ('Безъ числа согрѣшихъ, Господи прости мѧ')

In other languages

Albanian

Zot dhe Mjeshtër i jetës sime, mos më jep frymë përtese, kureshtie, lavdidashje dhe kotësie.

Po falmë frymë urtësie, përunjësie, durimi dhe dashurie.

Vlerësomë, o Zot dhe Mbret, t'i shoh fajet e mia dhe të mos e gjykoj tim vëlla. Se i bekuar je në jetë të jetëve, Amin.

Arabic

أيها الرب وسيد حياتي اعتقني من روح البطالة والفضول، وحب الرئاسة والكلام البطال

وانعم علي انا عبدك الخاطئ بروح العفة واتضاع الفكر والصبر والمحبة

نعم يا ملكي والهي هب لي ان أعرف ذنوبي وعيوبي والا أدين اخوتي فانك مبارك الى الأبد. آمين

Transliteration: 'Ayūha al-Rābbu wa'sayīd hayāti, a'aataqāni min rūh al-bitalāt wa'l-fūdūli, wahābi al-ri'asāt wa'al-kilām al-bitāl. wa'ineām eāli inā aabdāk al-khāti bi-ruh al-eafat, wa'itidai al-fīkr wa'l-sābr wa'l-mahāba. ya malīki, wa'Allāhi hab li'ān aārif dhabūbi wa'aayubi, wa'īlla udīn ikhwāti, fa'innāk mubarāk illā al-abād. Ameen.

The Arabic version follows the Greek form.

Belarusian

In the Cyrillic orthography:

Госпадзе і Ўладару жыцьця майго, духа ленасьці, нудy, уладалюбства і марнаслоўя ня дай мне.

Духа чысьціні, пакоры, цярпівасьці і любові дай мне, слузе Твайму.

Так, Госпадзе Ўладару! Дай мне бачыць мае правіны і не асуджаць брата майго, бо Ты блаславёны на вякі вякоў. Амін.

In the Latin orthography:

Hospadzie i Ŭładaru žyćcia majho, ducha lenaści, nudy, uładalubstva i marnasłoŭja nia daj mnie.

Ducha čyścini, pakory, ciaplivaści i lubovi daj mnie, słuzie Tvajmu.

Tak, Hospadzie Ŭładaru! Daj mnie bačyć maje praviny i nie asudžać brata majho, bo Ty błasłaviony na viaki viakoŭ. Amin.

Finnish

Herra, minun elämäni valtias! Estä minusta laiskuuden, velttouden, vallanhimon ja turhanpuhumisen henki.

Anna minulle, sinun palvelijallesi, sielun puhtauden, nöyryyden, kärsivällisyyden ja rakkauden henki.

Oi, Kuningas ja Herra! Anna minun nähdä rikokseni ja anna, etten veljeäni tuomitsisi, sillä siunattu olet sinä iankaikkisesti. Aamen.

The Finnish translation follows the Greek original.

Georgian

უფალო და მეუფეო ცხოვრებისა ჩემისაო, სულსა უქმობისასა და მიმომწვლილელობისასა, მთავრობის მოყვარებისასა და ცუდად მეტყველებისასა ნუ მიმცემ მე.

ხოლო სული სიწმიდისა, სიმდაბლისა, მოთმინებისა და სიყვარულისა მომმადლე მე, მოწასა შენსა.

ჰე, უფალო, მომანიჭე მე განცდაი თვისთა ცოდვათა და არა განკითხვად ძმისა ჩემისა, რამეთუ კურთხეულ ხარ შენ უკუნისამდე. ამინ

Transcription into the Latin alphabet, with apostrophe for glottalization: *upalo da meupeo tskhovrebisa chemisao, sulsa ukmobisasa da mimomts'vlilelobisasa, mtavrobis moqvarebisasa da tsudad met'kvelebisasa nu mimtsem me.*

kholo suli sits'midisa, simdablisa, motminebisa da siqvarulisa mommadle me, monasa shensa.

he, upalo, momanich'e me gantsdai tvista tsodvata da ara gank'itkhvad dzmisa chemisa, rametu k'urtkheul xar shen uk'unisamde. amin

German

Herr und Gebieter meines Lebens, den Geist des Müßiggangs, der Verzagtheit, der Herrschsucht und der Geschwätzigkeit gib mir nicht.

Gib mir hingegen, Deinem Knecht, den Geist der Keuschheit, der Demut, der Geduld und der Liebe.

Ja, Herr und mein König, gib mir, meine eigenen Sünden zu sehen und meinen Bruder nicht zu verurteilen, denn Du bist gesegnet in die Ewigkeit der Ewigkeit. Amen.

Hawaiian

E ka Haku a me ke Kahu o koʻu ola! Mai hō mai iaʻu i ka ʻuhane o ka naʻau palaka, ka manaʻo pauaho, ke kuko hewa a me ke kakahili.

Akā naʻe, e hō mai nō naʻe ʻOe iaʻu, Kāu ʻōhua, i ka ʻuhane o ke kūkapu, ka haʻahaʻa, ke ahonui a me ke aloha.

E ka Haku ē, ka Mōʻī hoʻi! E ʻae ʻOe mai iaʻu i ka hiki ke ʻike i koʻu mau hewa a me ka hiki ke hoʻohalahala ʻole aku i koʻu hoa kanaka; no ka mea, Nou ka pōmaikaʻi mai kēia manawa a mau loa aku no nā kau ā kau. ʻĀmene.

Japanese

主吾が生命の主宰よ、怠惰と、愁悶と、矜誇と、空談の情を吾に與うる勿れ。

貞操と、謙遜と、忍耐と、愛の情を我爾の僕（婢）に與え給え。

嗚呼主王よ、我に我が罪を見、我が兄弟を議せざるを賜え、蓋爾は世世に崇め讃めらる。「アミン」

Transcription into the Latin alphabet: *Shu waga inochino shusaiyo, okotarito, modaeto, hokorito, mudagotono kokoro-o, wareni atauru nakare.*

Misaoto, herikudarito, koraeto, ainokokoro-o, ware nannjino bokuhini ataetamae.

Ah shu oyo, wareni waga tumio mi, waga keitei o gisezaruo tamae, kedashi nannjiha yoyoni agamehomeraru. Amin.

Portuguese

Ó Senhor e Soberano de minha vida, não me dês um espírito de preguiça, de desânimo, de ambição ou de vaniloqüência.* (Prostração)

Mas um espírito de castidade, de humildade, de paciência e de amor, concedo-mo a mim, Teu servo. (Prostração)

Ó Senhor Rei, concede-me ver os meus pecados e que eu não julgue meu irmão, porquanto és bendito pelos séculos dos séculos. Amém. (Prostração)

- O texto grego tem "curiosidade".

Romanian

Doamne şi Stăpânul vieţii mele, duhul trândăviei, al grijii de multe, al iubirii de stăpânire şi al grăirii în deşert nu-mi-l da mie

Iar duhul curăţiei, al gândului smerit, al răbdării şi al dragostei dăruieşte-mi mie slugii tale.

Aşa Doamne, Împărate, dăruieşte-mi să-mi văd greşalele mele şi să nu osândesc pe fratele meu, că binecuvântat eşti în vecii vecilor. Amin.

The Romanian text follows the Greek version.

Slovak

Pane a Vládca môjho života, odním odo mňa ducha znechutenosti, nedbalosti, mocibažnosti a prázdnych rečí.

Daruj mne, svojmu služobníkovi, ducha miernosti, poníženosti, trpezlivosti a lásky.

Áno, Pane a Kráľu, daj, aby som videl vlastné prehrešenia a nepodsudzoval svojho brata, lebo ty si požehnaný na veky vekov. Amen.

A different translation:

Pane a Vládca môjho života, odožeň odo mňa ducha zúfalstva, nedbanlivosti, mocibažnosti a prázdnych rečí.

Daruj mne, tvojmu služobníkovi, ducha čistoty, pokory, trpezlivosti a lásky.

Áno, Pane a Kráľu, daruj mi vidieť vlastné hriechy a neodsudzovať môjho brata, lebo ty si požehnaný na veky vekov, amen.

Ukrainian

Господи і Владико життя мого, духа млявости, недбайливости, владолюбства й пустослів'я віджени від мене.

Духа же доброчесности і смиренномудрія, терпіння й любови даруй мені, недостойному рабові Твоєму.

Так, Господи Царю, дай мені зріти мої прогрішення і не осуджувати брата мого, бо Ти благословен єси на віки віків. Амінь.

The Ukrainian version appears to follow the Mohyla version closely.

CODEX EPHRAEMI RESCRIPTUS

The **Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus** (Paris, National Library of France, Greek 9) is a manuscript of the Greek Bible, written on parchment. It is designated by the siglum **C** or **04** in the Gregory-Aland numbering of New Testament manuscripts, and **δ 3** (in the von Soden numbering of New Testament manuscripts. It contains most of the New Testament and some Old Testament books, with sizeable portions missing. It is one of the four great uncials (these being manuscripts which originally contained the whole of both the Old and New Testaments). The manuscript is not intact: its current condition contains material from every New Testament book except 2 Thessalonians and 2 John; however, only six books of the Greek Old Testament are represented. It is not known whether 2 Thessalonians and 2 John were excluded on purpose, or whether no fragment of either epistle happened to survive.

The manuscript is a palimpsest, with the pages being washed of their original text, and reused in the 12th century for the Greek translations of 38 treatises composed by Ephrem the Syrian, from whence it gets its name *Ephraemi Rescriptus.*

The lower text of the palimpsest was deciphered by biblical scholar and palaeographer Constantin von Tischendorf in 1840–1843, and was edited by him in 1843–1845.

Description

The manuscript is a codex (the forerunner to the modern book), written on parchment, measuring 12¼ x 9 in (31.4-32.5 x 25.6-26.4 cm). It has 209 leaves extant, of which 145 belong to the New Testament and 64 to the Old Testament. The letters are medium-sized uncials, in a single column per page, 40–46 lines per page. The text is written continuously, with no division of words (known as *Scriptio continua*), with the punctuation consisting of only a single point, as in codices Alexandrinus and Vaticanus. The beginning sections have larger letters which stand out in the margin (similar to those in codices Codex Alexandrinus and Codex Basilensis). Iota (ι) and upsilon (υ) have a small straight line over them, which serves as a form of diaeresis. The breathings (utilised to designate vowel emphasis) and accents (used to indicate voiced pitch changes) were added by a later hand. The nomina sacra (special names/words considered sacred in Christianity - usually the first and last letters of the name/word in question are written, followed by an overline; sometimes other letters from within the word are used as well) tend to be contracted into three-letter forms rather than the more common two-letter forms.

A list of chapters (known as κεφαλαια / *kephalaia*) is preserved before the Gospel of Luke and the Gospel of John. One may deduce from this that the manuscript originally contained chapter lists for the Gospel of Matthew and Gospel of Mark too. The chapter titles (known as τιτλοι / *titloi*) were apparently not placed in the upper margin of the page; however it is possible the upper margins once contained the titles in red ink, which has since completely faded away; another possibility is the upper portions of the pages have been over-trimmed. The text of the Gospels is accompanied by marginal notations indicating the Eusebian canons (an early system of dividing the four Gospels into different sections, developed by early Christian writer Eusebius of Caesarea), albeit the numerals for the Eusebian Canons were likely written in red ink, which unfortunately have completely vanished. There are no systematic divisions in the other books.

The Pericope Adulterae (John 7:53–8:11) was likely missing from the original codex. The two leaves which contain John 7:3–8:34 are not extant, however by counting the lines and calculating how much space would be required to include John 7:53-8:11 (presuming there's no other large omission), it can be demonstrated they did not contain sufficient space to include the passage. The text of Mark 16:9–20 is included on folio 148r.

It is difficult to determine whether Luke 22:43–44 (Christ's agony at Gethsemane) was in the original codex; unfortunately the leaves containing the surrounding verses are not extant. Mark 15:28 is not included.

Missing Chapters/Verses

- Gospel of Matthew: *1:1–2; 5:15–7:5; 17:26–18:28; 22:21–23:17; 24:10–45; 25:30–26:22; 27:11–46; 28:15-fin.;*
- Gospel of Mark: *1:1–17; 6:32–8:5; 12:30–13:19;*
- Gospel of Luke: *1:1–2; 2:5–42; 3:21–4:25; 6:4–36; 7:17–8:28; 12:4–19:42; 20:28–21:20; 22:19–23:25; 24:7–45*
- Gospel of John: *1:1–3; 1:41–3:33; 5:17–6:38; 7:3–8:34; 9:11–11:7; 11:47–13:7; 14:8–16:21; 18:36–20:25;*
- Acts of the Apostles: *1:1–2; 4:3–5:34; 6:8; 10:43–13:1; 16:37–20:10; 21:31–22:20; 23:18–24:15; 26:19–27:16; 28:5-fin.;*
- Epistle to the Romans: *1:1–3; 2:5–3:21; 9:6–10:15; 11:31–13:10;*
- First Epistle to the Corinthians: *1:1–2; 7:18–9:6; 13:8–15:40;*
- Second Epistle to the Corinthians: *1:1–2; 10:8-fin.*
- Epistle to the Galatians: *1:1–20*
- Epistle to the Ephesians: *1:1–2:18; 4:17-fin.*
- Epistle to the Philippians: *1:1–22; 3:5-fin.*
- Epistle to the Colossians: *1:1–2;*
- First Epistle to the Thessalonians: *1:1; 2:9-fin.;*
- Second Epistle to the Thessalonians: *Everything*
- First Epistle to Timothy: *1:1–3:9; 5:20-fin.;*
- Second Epistle to Timothy: *1:1–2;*
- Epistle to Titus: *1:1–2*
- Epistle to Philemon: *1–2*
- Epistle to the Hebrews: *1:1–2:4; 7:26–9:15; 10:24–12:15;*
- Epistle of James: *1:1–2; 4:2-fin.*
- First Epistle of Peter: *1:1–2; 4:5-fin.;*
- Second Epistle of Peter: *1:1;*
- First Epistle of John: *1:1–2; 4:3-fin.*
- Second Epistle of John: *Everything*
- Third Epistle of John: *1–2;*
- Epistle of Jude: *1–2;*
- Book of Revelation: *1:1–2; 3:20–5:14; 7:14–17; 8:5–9:16; 10:10–11:3; 16:13–18:2; 19:5-fin.*

In the Old Testament, parts of the Book of Job, the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom, and Sirach survive.

Text

The New Testament text of the codex has been considered primarily as a representative of the Alexandrian text-type, although this affiliation varies from book to book. The text-types are groups of different New Testament manuscripts which share specific or generally related readings, which then differ from each other group, and thus the conflicting readings can separate out the groups. These are then used to determine the original text as published; there are three main groups with names: Alexandrian, Western, and Byzantine. It has a Byzantine affiliation in Matthew, a weak Alexandrian connection in Mark, and is considered an Alexandrian witness in John. In Luke its textual character is unclear. Textual critics Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton J.A. Hort classified it as a mixed text; Hermann von Soden classified it as an Alexandrian witness.

According to textual critic Kurt Aland, it agrees with the Byzantine text-type 87 times in the Gospels, 13 times in Acts, 29 times in Paul, and 16 times in the Catholic epistles. It agrees with the Nestle-Aland text 66 times (Gospels), 38 (Acts), 104 (Paul), and 41 (Cath.). It has 50 independent or distinctive readings in the Gospels, 11 in Acts, 17 in Paul, and 14 in the Catholic epistles. Aland placed the text of the codex in Category II of his New Testament manuscript text classification system. Category II manuscripts are described as being manuscripts "of a special quality, i.e., manuscripts with a considerable proportion of the early text, but which are marked by alien influences. These influences are usually of smoother, improved readings, and in later periods by infiltration by the Byzantine text." According to the Claremont Profile Method (a specific analysis method of textual data), its text is mixed in Luke 1, Luke 10, and Luke 20.

In the Book of Revelation, the codex is a witness to the same form of text as seen in 02 and 𝔓115.

The manuscript is cited in all critical editions of the Greek New Testament (UBS3, UBS4, NA26,*–17* NA27). In NA27 it belongs to the witnesses consistently cited of the first order. The readings of the codex correctors (C1, C2, and C3) are regularly cited in critical editions.

Notable readings

Below are some readings of the manuscript which agree or disagree with variant readings in other Greek manuscripts, or with varying ancient translations of the New Testament. See the main article Textual variants in the New Testament.

Interpolations

Matthew 8:13

και υποστρεψας ο εκατονταρχος εις τον οικον αυτου εν αυτη τη ωρα ευρεν τον παιδα υγιαινοντα (*and when the centurion returned to the house in that hour, he found the slave well* - see Luke 7:10)

*, c2b N Θ *f*1 33 545 g1 syhא incl. - **C**

omit - Majority of manuscripts

Matthew 27:49

ἄλλος δὲ λαβὼν λόγχην ἔνυξεν αὐτοῦ τὴν πλευράν, καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ὕδορ καὶ αἷμα (*the other took a spear and pierced His side, and immediately came out water and blood* - see John 19:34)

B L Γ 1010 1293 *pc* vgmssא incl. - **C**

omit - Majority of manuscripts

Acts 14:19

και διαλεγομενων αυτων παρρησια επεισαν τους οχλους αποστηναι απ' αυτων λεγοντες, οτι ουδεν αληθες λεγουσιν αλλα παντα ψευδονται - **C** 6 36 81 104 323 326 453 945 1175 1739 2818 syh(mg)
και πεισαντης τους οχλους - Majority of manuscripts

Some corrections

Matthew 11:2

B D P W Z Δ Θ 0233 *f*13 33א *δια (*by*) - **C**

δυο (*two*) - **C**3 L *f*>1 Byz

Acts 20:28

του κυριου (*of the Lord*) - **C*** 𝔓74 D E Ψ 33 36 453 945 1739 1891
του κυριου και του Θεου (*and God*) - **C**c P 049 326 1241 2492 Byz

1 Corinthians 12:9

εν τω αυτω πνευματι (*in His spirit*)
omit - **C***
incl. - **C**3 Majority of manuscripts

1 Timothy 3:16

* A* F G 33 365 1175א *ὅς ἐφανερώθη (*He was manifested*) - **C**
3 A2 Majority of manuscriptsא θεός ἐφανερώθη (*God was manifested*) - **C**2

James 1:22

λογου (*of the word*) - **C*** Majority of manuscripts
νομου (*of the law*) - **C**2 88 621 1067 1852

Some other textual variants

Matthew 22:10

αγαμος - **C**

B* L 0102 892 1010 syh(mg)א - νυμφων

γαμος - Majority of manuscripts

Mark 10:35

οι δυο υιοι Ζεβεδαιου (*the two sons of Zebedee*) - **C** B sa bo

οι υιοι Ζεβεδαιου (*the sons of Zebedee*) - Majority of manuscripts

Acts 15:23

γραψαντης δια χειρος αυτων επιστολην περιεχουσαν ταδε (*they wrote by their hands the letter containing this*) - **C** gig w geo
* A B bo ethא γραψαντης δια χειρος αυτων (*wrote by their hands*) - 𝔓33(vid) 𝔓45(vid) 𝔓74
γραψαντης δια χειρος αυτων ταδε (*they wrote this by their hands*) - Majority of manuscripts

Romans 16:15

Ιουνιαν, Νηρεα - **C*** F G

Ιουλιαν, Νηρεα - **C**c Majority of manuscripts

Romans 16:24

A B 5 811 263 623 1739 1838 1962 2127 itz vgww sa bo ethro Origenlatא omit - **C** 𝔓46 𝔓61 incl. - Majority of manuscripts

1 Corinthians 2:1

μυστηριον (*secret*) - **C** 𝔓46 א* A 88 436 ita,r syrp bo
σωτηριον (*savior*) - ℓ 598 ℓ 593 ℓ 599
μαρτυριον (*testimony*) - Majority of manuscripts

1 Corinthians 7:5

* A B D G P Ψ 33 81 104 181 629 630 1739 1877 1881 1962 it vg co arm ethא τη προσευχη (*prayer*) - **C** 𝔓11 𝔓46 c2 Majority of manuscriptsא - τη νηστεια και τη προσευχη (*fasting and prayer*)

2 Timothy 4:10

81 104 326 436 sa boptא Γαλλιαν - **C**

Γαλατιαν - Majority of manuscripts

James 1:12

κυριος (*Lord*) - **C**
ο κυριος (*the Lord*) - Majority of manuscripts
ο θεος (*God*) - 4 33(vid) 323 2816(vid) 945 1739 vg syp

A B Ψ 81 ff sa bo[8]:589א - omit

Revelation 1:5

c A 2020 2081 2814א λυσαντι ημας εκ (*freed us from*) - **C** 𝔓18

λουσαντι ημας εκ (*washed us from*) - Majority of manuscripts

Revelation 13:18

εξακοσιαι δεκα εξ (six hundred sixteen / 616) - **C** 𝔓115; Irlat
εξακοσιαι εξηκοντα εξ (666) - Majority of manuscripts

History

The codex's place of origin is unknown. Tischendorf tentatively suggested Egypt. Tischendorf also proposed the manuscript was produced by two scribes: one for the Old Testament, and one for the New Testament. Subsequent research indicates there may have been a third scribe involved. The text has been corrected by three correctors, designated by C1, C2, and C3 (Tischendorf designated them by C*, C**, and C***). Sometimes they are designated by Ca, Cb, and Cc. The first corrector (C1) worked in a scriptorium, but the exact location where any of the correctors worked is unknown. The first corrector's corrections are not numerous except in the Book of Sirach.

The third and last corrector (C3) likely wrote in the 800s, possibly in Constantinople (modern day Istanbul in Turkey). He conformed readings of the codex to ecclesiastical use, inserting many accents, breathings, and vocal notes. He also added liturgical directions in the margin, and worked extensively on the codex. The codex was subsequently washed of its text, had the pages scrapped (howbeit imperfectly), and reused in the twelfth century.

After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the codex was brought to Florence by an émigré scholar. It belonged to Niccolo Ridolpho († 1550), Cardinal of Florence. After his death it was probably bought by Piero Strozzi, an Italian military leader, for Catherine de' Medici. Catherine brought it to France as part of her dowry, and from the Bourbon royal library it came to rest in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. The manuscript was rebound in 1602.

The older writing was first noticed by Pierre Allix, a Protestant pastor. Jean Boivin, supervisor of the Royal Library, made the first extracts of various readings of the codex (under the notation of Paris 9) to Ludolph Küster, who published Mill's New Testament in 1710. In 1834–1835 potassium ferricyanide was used to bring out faded or eradicated ink, which had the effect of defacing the vellum from green and blue to black and brown.

The first collation of the New Testament was made in 1716 by Johann Jakob Wettstein for Richard Bentley, who intended to prepare a new edition of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*. According to Bentley's correspondence, it took two hours to read one page, and Bentley paid Wettstein £50. This collation was used by Wettstein in his own Greek New Testament of 1751–1752. Wettstein also made the first description of the codex. Wettstein examined the text of the Old Testament only occasionally, but he did not publish any of it. Various editors made occasional extracts from the manuscript, but Tischendorf was the first who read it completely (Old and New Testament). Tischendorf gained an international reputation when he published the Greek New Testament text in 1843, and the Old Testament in 1845. Although Tischendorf worked by eye alone, his deciphering of the palimpsest's text was remarkably accurate. The torn condition of many folios, and the ghostly traces of the text overlaid by the later one, made the decipherment extremely difficult. Even with modern aids like ultraviolet photography, not all the text is securely legible. Robert W. Lyon published a list of corrections to Tischendorf's edition in 1959. This was also an imperfect work.

According to Edward Miller (1886), the codex was produced "in the light of the most intellectual period of the early Church."

According to Frederic Kenyon, "the original manuscript contained the whole Greek Bible, but only scattered leaves of it were used by the scribe of St. Ephraem's works, and the rest was probably destroyed".

Swete only examined the text of the Old Testament. According to him the original order of the Old Testament cannot be reconstructed. The scribe who converted the manuscript into a palimpsest used the leaves for his new text without regard to their original arrangement. The original manuscript was not a single volume.

It is currently housed in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Grec 9) in Paris.